

Foreigners Told to Leave Lithuania

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MOSCOW, March 27 — The Soviet Foreign Ministry today ordered all foreigners to leave Lithuania, charging that the presence of journalists and diplomats was encouraging militants in their defiance of Soviet power.

The Kremlin also angrily condemned the United States Senate, saying its resolution last Thursday supporting the breakaway republic could become "a kind of detonator in the complex and explosive situation that has arisen in this republic."

Gennadi I. Gerasimov, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, told a news conference that the creeping extension of Soviet military control in Lithuania and the expulsion of foreigners did not mean the Kremlin was planning to crush the rebellious republic by force.

Defense Minister Dmitri T. Yazov, interviewed on the evening television news program *Vremya* on a visit to Paris, said: "So far, the Soviet Army has not been used. And I think that everything will be resolved by peaceful methods."

Use of Troops Defended

Irascible and ill-at-ease under a siege of skeptical questioning, Mr. Gerasimov defended the use of troops to seize army deserters and to take control of buildings claimed by a wing of the Lithuanian Communist Party loyal to Moscow, but said he could not explain why military helicopters were used on Monday to drop leaflets promoting a street rally against the independent Government.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm not there."

"These episodes of today, or yesterday or tomorrow are of secondary nature," he added. "The main thing is that by its declaration of independence, which was adopted two weeks ago, the Lithuanian Parliament acted against the Constitution. The President must save the Constitution."

Last week, the Foreign Ministry began selectively restricting travel to Lithuania, setting off alarm in the republic that the Government was trying to remove witnesses before cracking down on the defiant Lithuanian leadership.

Journalists Must Leave

The order today temporarily bans all trips to the republic by journalists, diplomats and business executives, and requires the scores of foreign journalists now there to leave as soon as their permission expires.

Reporters working in Moscow are required to register trips within the country in advance, and to specify their date of return to the capital.

Yuri A. Gremitskikh, a deputy Foreign Ministry spokesman, said all correspondents would soon be returned to Moscow.



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Soviet troops continued to take control of buildings in Vilnius.

"Sometimes this is necessary, just as sometimes in some families the guests are asked to leave the family to itself for a while, so that it can figure things out among itself," he said.

Mr. Gremitskikh added that "your presence there is a very attractive focus for certain extremist elements who want to involve you in their maneuvers."

"I would say that this is not in your interests, for you to be involved in this

Soviets say the diplomats and reporters stir up the militants.

way in some politically, morally or psychologically unpleasant situations," he said.

Mr. Gerasimov criticized The New York Times, accusing it of "playing into the hands of the separatists" by replacing "U.S.S.R." with "Lithuania" in the datelines appearing recently atop articles written from Vilnius.

"Maybe this is a detail, but this detail might be blown up — 'Oh, the United States recognizes the independence of Lithuania,'" the spokesman said. "This, by the way, is already interference."

Allan M. Siegal, an assistant managing editor of The Times, said in New York: "Our news columns don't take sides on political disputes, and our datelines don't imply recognition. We use Lithuania in datelines to reflect the territory's distinctive regional character, just as we have long used Scotland, Wales, Sicily,

Sardinia, Corsica and other regional place names."

The Foreign Ministry's travel ban was the first time such a blanket restriction has been imposed in recent years in one of the Baltic republics, where the campaign for independence has generated little tension and no violent conflict.

Normally such limits are imposed only in areas of ethnic unrest, on grounds of safety, or when the local authorities themselves ask that foreigners be kept out.

Although the Soviet press and television have continued a concerted propaganda campaign intended to convey a sense of ethnic hostility and widespread disorder, Western correspondents on the scene say the only anxiety has been generated by Moscow's war of nerves.

Mr. Gremitskikh said the expulsion of foreigners stemmed from President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's presidential order last week to defend Soviet sovereignty in Lithuania.

"Foreign citizens are ordered to leave the boundaries of the Lithuanian S.S.R. and to temporarily refrain from entering its territory," the statement said, using the initials that refer to Lithuania as a Soviet socialist republic. "This also applies to foreign diplomats, commercial representatives and journalists accredited in the U.S.S.R. Correspondents accredited in Moscow must leave the territory of the Lithuanian S.S.R. on the expiration of the previously announced time limits on their stay."

The United States Senate last week passed a general statement of support for Lithuania, but rejected language calling on the White House to formally recognize the new Government as an independent nation.

Mr. Gerasimov today read a formal reply saying:

"Federal jurisdiction has priority over the jurisdiction of a territory which is part of the federation, just as in any other federative state. American legislators should have known this, and the passing of a declaration by the Senate concerning a sovereign Soviet republic is characterized by us as interference in the internal matters of our country, and as contradicting the norms and the principles of international law. The unacceptable and categorical tone of its resolution must also be noted."

"The attempt by the American Senate to influence the dynamics and the character of processes taking place in our country does not lead to the settlement of the situation, but on the contrary, it aggravates the situation and sharpens the opposition between various groups of Lithuania's population, and might become a kind of detonator in the complex and explosive situation which has taken place in this republic," the statement concluded.